

System Upgrades Ahead

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For members of **Choctaw Electric Cooperative**

FEBRUARY 2023

CEC *inside your* co-op

Spotlight

Nashoba Schools Get A Jolt

Thanks to the Clean School Bus Program, Nashoba students will soon ride to school in a clean, efficient electric-powered bus.

When Chuck Caughern heard the federal government had a program that helped schools purchase electric-powered school buses, he jumped on the opportunity. Caughern, superintendent of Nashoba Schools, applied for the EPA's Clean School Bus Program in September. Through the program, Oklahoma received more than \$27 million to help eligible schools purchase 74 zero emission school buses.

With an infusion of roughly \$1 billion from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Clean School Bus Program aims to accelerate the nation's transition to electric and low-emission school buses and promote cleaner air in and around schools and communities. The goal is to replace older buses with 2,500 zero-emission school buses in 400 districts across the U.S.

"I had no clue about our chances, but I knew for sure we wouldn't get it if we didn't apply," Caughern said.

In October, Caughern learned Nashoba was one of 18 school districts in the state selected for the program. Thrilled by the

news, Caughern said program officials asked him what size bus the school would need.

"I told them we don't care how big it is, we just want one," he joked. "They told me not to worry. They were going to trick it out."



Lion Electric Co. is a leading manufacturer of zero-emission vehicles, including the Lion C school bus, above. Nashoba Schools will receive a Lion total electric bus, thanks to the EPA's Clean School Bus Program.

Manufactured by Lion Electric Company, a company devoted to building zero emission commercial vehicles, Nashoba's new bus includes air conditioning, stereo, padded seats, and all the necessary add-ons to ensure safety and comfort for

its 74-passengers. The battery range of roughly 120 miles is more than enough to cover the bus route. The bus will refuel nightly using the soon-to-be-installed charging station located at the school. Cost for the charging station is covered by the program.

For the 400 U.S. schools lucky enough to be selected, an electric-powered school bus offers big benefits. Fuel costs for an all-electric bus run from 50 to 80 percent less than buses that run on diesel. Because EVs have fewer moving parts, most owners find they spend much less on routine auto maintenance. For students, an all-electric school bus eliminates diesel fumes and provides a healthier ride.

Nashoba School should receive its new bus any day. When it arrives, it will be put straight to work, delivering students to and from school—quietly, safely and more efficiently.

It's an all-around win for Nashoba and its students. Caughern, for one, is plenty happy about it. He does have one regret, though. "I wish I'd asked for two," he said. ☺

For more information on electric vehicles, including fuel savings and other benefits, please visit www.takecontrolandsave.coop. For a map of public EV charging stations in Oklahoma, please visit ok.gov/evoklahoma.

MANAGER'S REPORT



Upgrades Ahead

CEC beefs up critical infrastructure

BY KOONEY DUNCAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Two years ago, Storm Uri plunged us into a mini Ice Age and all of us hoped we'd seen the last of that kind of cold.

So much for wishful thinking.

On December 23, Mother Nature gave a brief, yet impressive encore performance that sent temperatures plunging into the negative double digits. The extreme weather plus the higher energy use due to the holiday pushed Choctaw Electric's system to the max, causing the Hochatown substation to go offline, however, CEC restored power within a few hours.

You might wonder how we made it through Storm Uri without a hitch but lost power during the less severe December storm. The answer is the rapid growth the co-op has experienced in certain parts of our system that show no signs of slowing down.

Since 2020, Choctaw Electric has added more than 1,570 residences to our load, making us one of the fastest-growing co-ops in the state. We expect another 1,000 new homes to come online this year.

This growth is no surprise to us. We've seen it coming, and we planned for it. For the past several years, we've focused on upgrading switches, transformers, and other equipment throughout our service

area. These investments helped us ride out Storm Uri with very few problems.

But the December storm was a cold poke in the eye. Rather than wave it off as a once-in-a-100-year event—that somehow happened twice—we prefer to play it safe. To provide you with the safest and most reliable service today and tomorrow, we've decided to speed up the completion dates on several construction projects.

“The improvements will position Choctaw Electric for the growth that lies ahead and prepare us for the wild cards Mother Nature likes to hide up her sleeve.”

We are working with Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC) on some of these plans, which include increasing the capacity size of the new Chahta substation and possibly building a new substation in

McCurtain County. To improve line capacity in high-growth areas, we plan to swap out the existing #2 ACSR wire (184 amp capacity) for a thicker, 477 ACSR overhead conductor wire capable of carrying 659 amps. Quite a difference. We're also beefing up our underground services.

There's a lot to do and we're eager to get to work. The improvements will position Choctaw Electric for the growth that lies ahead and prepare us for the wild cards Mother Nature likes to hide up her sleeve.

We'll keep you posted on our progress through our newsletter and Facebook. Please stay in touch.

Choctaw Electric Cooperative

Serving members in Choctaw, Pushmataha, Atoka, McCurtain, Bryan and Leflore counties.

Monday-Friday • 8 am - 5 pm

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Good To Know

Do You Rely On Life Support?

It's time to update your CEC records

If you rely on life support equipment in your home, it is time to update your records with Choctaw Electric.

CEC maintains a record of its life support dependent members so the co-op can notify you of scheduled outages in your area. To protect your health and safety, the co-op asks members to submit a life support member form every year in March.

The forms are available for download at www.choctawelectric.net, or call your co-op at 800-780-6486.

Life-support-dependent members should be prepared with battery backup or another source of alternate power during a power outage.

Your safety is our top priority. Thank you for your cooperation!



CHOCTAW ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

2023 Board Meetings

The Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC) board of trustees meets at 9 am on the last Tuesday of every month at co-op headquarters in Hugo. Meetings are open to the public. Meeting minutes are available at www.choctawelectric.net or at any CEC location. To read the minutes on your smartphone or tablet, please scan the bar code to the right.



- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| ■ February 28 | ■ August 29 |
| ■ March 28 | ■ September 26 |
| ■ April 25 | ■ October 31 |
| ■ May 30 | ■ November 28 |
| ■ June 27 | ■ Thursday, December 21 |
| ■ July 25 | |



Get Your Credit

When a co-op member dies, their share of CEC profits goes to their estate. Often these capital credits go unclaimed because surviving family members aren't aware of them. To claim estate credits, a family member or estate executor must fill out an estate capital credit application.

Find application forms at www.choctawelectric.net. Questions? Please call 800-780-6486.

Co-op Youth

Camp Adventure For Eighth Graders

Your teen could win it with 150 words

If making new friends while building leadership skills in a fun, outdoor setting sounds good to your eighth grader, please tell them to apply for Energy Camp. Choctaw Electric (CEC) will select three teens to attend camp this summer.

Energy Camp will be held May 30-June 2 at Canyon Camp near Hinton. The camp is free and includes transportation to and from camp.

To be considered, interested teens must submit an application form along with a brief 150-200 word writing assignment on the following question: *If there was no electric service in your area, what would you use to power your home?*

Application forms and essays are due March 10, 2023 by 5 pm.

Teens applying for camp must be eighth graders and must attend school in the CEC service area.

Find application forms and more details online at www.choctawelectric.net, or contact Jia Johnson or Brad Kendrick at 800-780-6486., ext. 209 or ext. 241

MAY 30-JUNE 2, 2023

ENERGY CAMP

POWERED BY OKLAHOMA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

NEARLY 80 STUDENTS ARE SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN ENERGY CAMP. CAMPERS WILL EXPERIENCE ENERGY IN A WHOLE NEW LIGHT!

- BE A LINEMAN**
Learn what it's like to be an electric lineworker by climbing poles, riding in a bucket truck and more!
- MAKE FRIENDSHIPS**
Energy Camp is a great way to make lifelong friendships with students across Oklahoma!
- LEARN LEADERSHIP SKILLS**
Learn important leadership skills through small group and career development activities and competitions.

APPLY TODAY

SCAN THE QR CODE TO ACCESS THE ENERGY CAMP WEBPAGE. YOU WILL LEARN ALL THINGS ENERGY CAMP AND HOW TO APPLY!

Safety First

Protect Holiday Gifts With A Surge Protector

If Santa Claus dropped off a new smart TV, home theater system, or laptop computer at your home this Christmas, be sure to protect your gifts with a high-quality surge protector.

Thunderstorms, lightning strikes—even the interference generated when you turn on a hair dryer or a vacuum cleaner—can affect your electronics. Plugging them into an inexpensive power strip can't prevent problems unless it's designed to deter by detecting even minor surges and tripping the circuit breaker, or sacrificing itself to save your electronic device. Consider a power strip with a shut-off switch that will limit energy use while in standby mode.

Because power strips absorb every energy fluctuation, it's a good idea to replace power strips every two to three years.

For the utmost protection, make sure to provide surge protection for all of your expensive devices. Choose either whole-house surge protection installed at the breaker box by an electrician, or individual surge protection strips that will sacrifice themselves to save your electronics during a power surge.

If you have questions about surge protection or other safety matters, please contact Guy Dale, CEC safety director, at 800-780-67486 or send email to info@choctawelectric.coop.



QUICK TIP:

Avoid plugging surge-sensitive electronic devices into the same

power strip with laser printers, air conditioners, or other appliances with large motor loads. These produce their own low-level power surges that will affect all the devices sharing the strip.



Keep An Eye Out For CEC Crews

Choctaw Electric crews continue to change out meters in the western portions of CEC territory. Their work is important to your service. We appreciate your cooperation.

DID YOU KNOW?



If you turn your thermostat down for more than eight hours at a time during the winter months, you can save up to 1% on your electricity bill for every degree you decrease your thermostat setting.



If you rely on a portable generator to provide power during an outage, please make sure your generator is equipped with a generator transfer switch. A transfer switch prevents the generator from back feeding electricity onto the power line and electrocuting co-op lineworkers.



USING A GENERATOR?

8 DANGEROUS MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE



1 IN ENCLOSED SPACES

Always use it in a well-ventilated area.



2 NEAR WINDOWS OR DOORS

Place it at least 20 feet away from windows and doors.



3 IN A GARAGE

Even if the door is up, never use a generator in a garage.



4 IN THE ELEMENTS

Run it on a dry surface under a canopy-like structure (but not in a carport).



5 PLUGGED INTO A WALL OUTLET

This can be deadly to you, family members, neighbors or utility workers.



6 WITH THE WRONG EXTENSION CORD

Use a properly rated cord to plug appliances into a generator.



7 WITHOUT CARBON MONOXIDE (CO) TESTERS

CO detectors should be on every level of your home (test them monthly).



8 IN DISREPAIR

Make sure your generator is well-maintained and in good working order.



Safe Electricity.org